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RESTORE THE SPIRIT OF THE ORGANIC LAW; RESTRICT THE  
FEDERAL POWER; EXALT STATE SOVEREIGNTY.

SPEECH  
OF  
HON. J. F. DOWDELL, OF ALABAMA.

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, FEBRUARY 2, 1859.

The House being in Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union, and having under consideration the President's Annual Message—

MR. DOWDELL rose and said :

MR. CHAIRMAN : I do not intend to discuss, at this time, the subject of the tariff; nor to reply at length to the ingenious and able argument of the gentleman from Pennsylvania, [Mr. MORRIS,] who has just taken his seat. I deny the constitutional power of this Government to impose any duty for protection. He takes the power for granted, and endeavors to show, by an able review of the past policy of this and other countries, that a tariff for protection is highly expedient; and that it not only benefits the manufacturer, but after a series of years will cheapen the price of the protected articles to the consumers. In the course of his remarks, he says :

"I challenge the advocates of free trade to produce a single article which has had the benefit of protection for a series of years, that has not fallen greatly in price. Instead of protective duties enhancing the cost of fabrics, they have everywhere, in the United States and in Europe, been the certain and only reliable means of insuring its abatement."

Now, Mr. Chairman, is it not a little strange that the great agricultural and laboring classes of this country, who consume the greater part of these protected articles, have not before this time discovered the truth of this proposition, and been before Congress with petitions for higher duties? Is it not still more strange that the protected classes, whose manufactures are thus reduced in price, have been the only people who clamor for high tariffs? But, in answer to the challenge to the friends of free trade, I can give him a class of property of no little value, which has for a "series of years"—yes, sir, for fifty years—been protected against foreign competition to the point of prohibition, and has all the time, aside from temporary fluctuations caused by derangements in the currency, steadily increased in price hundreds per cent. I allude to the slave property of the South, now worth \$2,000,000,000. Is not this a case in point?

But, Mr. Chairman, I will dismiss this subject for the present, and proceed to the consideration of another, which I deem no less important at this juncture of affairs, and to which I desire to call the attention of the committee and of the country. Sir, after a careful examination and close study of the principles and objects of the Republican party, as I find them embodied in their platform and the speeches of their leading statesmen, and especially in the late speech of the Senator from New York, [Mr. SEWARD,] delivered at Rochester, I feel it to be my duty once more to warn the South of the approach of her enemies. These indications are unmistakable of a fixed purpose, and a fell design to crush our institutions whenever opportunity offers for a successful assault, and accumulating power gives strength for the onset. It matters not that such principles are at war with the spirit of the fathers which brought our Government into being; nor that their enforcement will destroy the peace of the country and subvert the temple of American liberty; onward to the death, is their motto, though fire and sword should clear the way to the goal of unhallowed ambition, and blood and bones mark the track

of the destroyer. Are these the sentiments of a majority of the northern people? This is a pregnant question. Upon the fact hangs the destiny of the Republic. If not now in the ascendant, are they likely to control the northern mind?

The steady increase of power which has marked every step of the party hostile to southern institutions, under whatever name for the time being it assumed; the unflagging zeal which animated them, and the persistent efforts which have been constantly put forth, not only by its leaders, but by the whole party, on every occasion and in every conceivable way, to arrest, embarrass, weaken, and hem in slavery, should warn the South of danger, and arouse our people throughout the country to the magnitude of impending calamities. Sir, I had occasion, during the last session, to call the attention of this House to the subject, and to invoke the reflecting and conservative men of the North to a consideration of the measures of public policy, which in my judgment, were then demanded to prevent sectional collisions, which would certainly result in a dismemberment of the Confederacy. Subsequent elections throughout the North, disastrous as they were to the Democratic party, have served to confirm me in the opinions then entertained, and, I trust, have furnished evidence sufficient to remove doubts from the minds of all, about the propriety of providing additional guarantees protective of the rights and interests of the minority.

We of the South can no longer rely solely upon national party organizations for safety. Some more sure and powerful agency must be brought into operation to perpetuate the Government, and protect our institutions. The spirit of fanaticism, in its career to full and desolating dominion, has hitherto defied all the restraints which Christian association, civil and political affinities, imposed; and now is "like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear; which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely." The Democrats of the North have fought long and well for constitutional equality, and manfully rolled back the tide of oppression which threatened to sweep over the constitutional barriers around the minority section. But they, too, have been stricken down; and now, no hope remains for the country, save in a prompt and radical amendment of the organic law. Outside of the time-honored party, no hand is left which we can grasp with the cordiality of friendship. They, however, though few in numbers, and bereft of political power, still furnish the strongest incentives to union, if we can agree upon a basis of government guaranteeing to each and all security against oppression.

But let us look to the principles and objects of the Republican party, which is now the controlling organization in almost the entire North. The Senator from New York, after laying down the postulate that the two system of labor, North and South, are "incongruous and incompatible," and that "they cannot exist permanently in one country," and affirming that "no aristocracy of slaveholders shall ever make the laws of the land in which I shall be content to live," goes on to say that the policy and designs of the slaveholding South is to establish slavery in every State in the Union; and that the Democratic party is, and has been, a faithful ally, to carry out the scheme; and to escape such a result there is left "only one way, *the Democratic party must be permanently dislodged from the Government.*" The reason is "that the Democratic party is inextricably committed to designs of the slaveholders which I have described." And further, "it is high time for the friends of freedom to rush to the rescue of the Constitution, and that their very first duty is to *dismiss the Democratic party from the administration of the Government.*" And still further, he says:

"Every one knows that it is the Republican party, or none, that shall displace the Democratic party. Subserviency to slavery is a law written not only on the forehead of the Democratic party, but also on its very soul; so resistance to slavery, and devotion to freedom, the popular elements now actively working for the Republican party among the people, *must and will be the resources for its ever-renewing strength and constant invigoration.*" \* \* \* "I know that the Democratic party must go down, and the Republican party must rise into its place." \* \* \* "It has already won advantages which render that triumph now both easy and certain."

Sir, no higher eulogium can be passed upon the Democratic party than is to be found in the bitter invectives of the Senator. And this onslaught is made upon

that time-honored organization, because, by contending for the equality which a common Constitution recognizes, it has been found on the side of the South, whose people never demanded any thing but her rights under that instrument. In the opinion of the Senator, that party now proudly stands the only barrier between fanaticism and its cherished object—the entire overthrow and subjugation of the South. To clear the pathway of the Republican party to power, it must be “*dislodged*.” And to encourage the Free-Soil army to the attack upon the strong hold of the friends of the Constitution, the Senator endeavors to inspire faith and boldness in his followers, by the positive declaration, “I know that the Democratic party must go down, and the Republican party must rise into its place.” “Forewarned, forearmed,” is an old adage by which we intend to profit. Let not that Senator, nor his followers, flushed with the prospect of easy triumph, plume themselves upon their superior numbers, when they have “*dislodged the Democracy*,” and dream that the battle has been fought and won. There still remains a citadel untaken, manned by southern braves, which will defy your legions, and “laugh at the shaking of a spear.” You cannot quench the spirit of liberty. You may succeed in conquering the Democratic party; but on that victory your glory will culminate. “Canst thou draw out leviathan with a hook?” “Lay thy hand upon” the South; “remember the battle; do no more.”

Sir, I deny that the interests of the two sections are necessarily incompatible. The very contrariety in pursuits and productions, which exists in the different sections of the country, constitutes a strong bond of Union; our natural dependence on each other for commercial prosperity and national security is the language of Providence, designed to make us love, instead of hate each other. Nothing but the wicked spirit of fanaticism, at war with all that is good and right and peaceable, can disturb our harmony. And when that Senator asserts, in the words of Napoleon, applied to Europe, that “it must be either all Cossack or all Republican,” to illustrate the antagonism between the slaveholding and non-slaveholding States of this Union, he but publishes the desire of his own heart to destroy the institutions of the South. No one knows better than he does, that not a man in the South ever thinks of extending African Slavery over the northern States. He has not the remotest idea of any attempt by the South to do this. What, then, is the meaning of the declaration, unless it be that this country must become “all Republican?” That slavery must be abolished when the Democratic party shall have been *dislodged*, and the republican party installed into power? Sir, the Democratic party has aided the South only in standing by the Constitution, which recognizes and protects her rights. Is it for this that it must be *dislodged and dismissed* from power? In the opinion of that Senator, and the party for which he speaks, is the Constitution pliant to their purposes? Is there no regard for that solemn compact? Is the Democratic party the only obstacle in their way to full dominion and universal emancipation?

Such, sir, appears to be the opinion of the leaders of the Republican party. Whilst this truth furnishes to the South strong motives to cherish and maintain the Democratic organization, thus assaulted by her enemies, at the same time it should warn us to look well to our other defenses; for parties, however pure in professions and principles, are swayed by the power of popular passions, and ebb and flow with the certainty, if not with the regularity, of the tides of the ocean. When a sound and healthy public opinion exists, they can develop and embody the purposes of the majority, and contribute to the growth and glory of the country. But they will be found unequal to the task of protecting minorities for any long period of time. When needed most, then are they ever the weakest. So soon as public opinion and sentiment cease to be morally sound and healthy, a pure party goes into a minority and becomes useless for defense, and powerless to uphold a government. At this point the necessity arises for further distribution of power by constitutional compact, and such veto reservations to the weaker section as may enable it to check the inroads which every majority will sooner or



later make upon the rights of the minority. Sir, New York has spoken through her great leader, who utters the voice of a majority of her people, "that this country must be all Republican." What say the New England States? A true exponent of their faith and principles, [Mr. WASHBURN,] lately said, in this House, on the subject of our common Territories :

"The Republican party affirms that negro servitude is a deadly blight upon the social and economical condition of a country. Hence it follows irresistibly, that whenever the members of this party have the power to inhibit it, it is their duty to exercise that power. Congress can keep it from a Territory if it will pass a law for its exclusion; and from the State to be formed out of such Territory; for in no community, from which slavery is excluded till it becomes a State, will it ever be subsequently established."

How stands the case in the Northwest? Let the senior member from Ohio [Mr. GIDDINGS] speak for his party :

"The gulf that separates the Republican and Democratic parties is broad and deep; one reasoning and acting for freedom, the other for slavery, it becomes impossible for them to agree on any collateral question." \* \* \*

\* \* \* "There is no neutral ground between right and wrong, between liberty and slavery."

To these representative opinions may be added what the Republican party puts forth in its general platform :

"Resolved, That the constitution confers upon Congress *sovereign* power over the Territories of the United States for their government; and that, in the exercise of this power, it is both the right and duty of Congress to prohibit in the Territories those twin relics of barbarism, polygamy and slavery."

Now, sir, I have given these few extracts from different portions of the North to show that they all agree: First, that the Democratic party, which they consider an ally of slavery, "*shall be dislodged.*" Second, that, in complete possession of the non-slaveholding States, they will have power sufficient to control the legislation of Congress; and when fully installed and firmly fixed in power they will use it to the destruction of slavery. They do not propose directly to meddle with the institution in the States, but will first confine it to the present area, by excluding it from all the common Territories. This having been done, they will then prohibit the trade between the States. Then will follow its inhibition along the coast. Next, its abolition in the District, navy, and dock-yards, &c. During the time of these operations, by protective tariffs and high duties, discriminating against slave products, they will gather the profits of slave labor, and squander the legitimate fruits of our industry upon multiplied objects of improvement in their own section, until the institution, completely depressed and depleted, will fall an easy prey to their designs.

This is the programme of the Republican party. That it will be carried out, fully and speedily, I have not a doubt, unless resistance be made promptly and firmly at every point. Knowing as I do the southern people; their intelligence, patriotism, and temper; their ability to maintain their rights, and their nerve to repel aggression, come from what quarter it may, I must conclude that the centralization of political power in the Federal Government, by a *combination of the free States*, will not enable them to accomplish their purpose set forth, but will certainly produce collisions between the sections disastrous to the peace of the Union.

Let us for a moment suppose that this feeling at the North, inimical to slavery, has been stimulated by hypocritical leaders, with a view to consolidate their strength, and to get power, rather than with any ulterior design of actual abolition; still, I must believe that the masses, whose minds have been excited and passions inflamed against us with the zeal of honesty, will pursue their purpose to its accomplishment. No human ability will be strong enough to suppress the agitation, or to direct the whirlwind, which drives to the complete demolition of the object of their hatred. The masses of the North, taught to believe that southern prosperity is their loss, and that the destruction of African labor would enhance the profits of white labor, together with that fanatical religious class who believe that enmity to slavery is friendship with God, would not rest content with the mere honors of office; but, once in power, will demand the fulfillment of their expectations in the total destruction of the institution of slavery.

For the last eight years, the Government has been in the possession of the non-slaveholding States of the Union, every department of it; and nothing but



the conservative position of the Democratic party, which has controlled it during the time, has prevented aggressive legislation of the most odious and oppressive character. Gradually, but surely, the Free-State party has been growing, until every power of the Federal Government is almost within its grasp. Every election at the North demonstrates the weakness of the friends of the Constitution. The time is not far distant when the experiment will be made, whether the Government can be administered in that spirit of justice and equity which has hitherto blessed our people, and promoted and prospered the institutions of all parts of the country. That it cannot be done without a wise distribution of power, so as to produce an equilibrium between the various conflicting interests, or at least attain a safe approximation to an equipoise, the history of all Governments clearly teaches.

A combination between the non-slaveholding States, by which all the departments of the Government are secured and its powers completely centralized, has defeated the intention of the framers of our Constitution, and rendered the division of power provided in that instrument comparatively useless. It is true that we have a President armed with the conservative veto to check unwholesome legislation; but this office can be controlled by the *combination*. It is true we have a Senate equalizing the powers of the respective States and a check upon popular passion; but that body can be controlled by the *combination*. It is true that we have a House of Representatives to speak for a majority of the people of the States, but that body can be controlled by the *combination*. The Supreme Court, organized for life, or during good behavior, and thus in a great degree made independent and free from all party prejudices, surely is a safeguard to the Constitution? But a threat has already been made to reorganize this august tribunal, and it can and will be controlled by the *combination*.

Thus it will at once be seen that, whilst all the forms of the Constitution are left, the substance of the original compact can be destroyed. The Government has ceased to be what it was in the beginning—a Government of divided powers, with its wise system of checks and balances—and is but little removed from that *consolidated* state which amounts to a complete revolution, and will surely lead to a *centralized despotism*. He is, indeed, a dreamer, who imagines that the rights of the States can be secure, or that civil liberty can long survive in such a state of affairs. These evils must be remedied *forthwith*. There is not a moment to be lost in the effort to restore the Constitution to its pristine vigor and purity. In the present calm of the public mind, a short pause in popular passion and sectional strife, the twilight hour before the darkness comes on, let us recur to first principles, and summon all our strength in the last attempt to save the liberties which our Union was formed to foster and secure.

Perhaps I shall be told that we are safe from the aggressions of Federal power, because of the barriers which State sovereignty erects around the reserved rights of the States; that these cannot be encroached upon without a palpable violation of the Constitution and assumption of despotic power which no party would attempt. Let it be remembered that the tyrant stealthily, like the tiger, approaches his prey until within reach, when, throwing all reserve away, he springs suddenly upon the object of desire. These barriers, however sacred, and, in a well-balanced organization, however strong, will prove ineffectual against the *combination* which I have described; and like the other defenses, would either yield to the swollen current of usurpation, or, by firm resistance, produce the collision which constitutions and compacts were made to avoid. Hence, the conclusion is inevitable that without additional checks to Federal power, our present system, when the Government shall have passed into the hands of the *combined majority section*, will result in collisions and revolutions totally incompatible with the integrity of the Government. Nothing now prevents this catastrophe but the national Democratic party. And shall we longer risk ourselves and hold the rights and liberties of our people upon a tenure so frail? What assurance have we that any mere

party organization will last a twelve month? And if it should last, who can predict its change of policy? Something more stable than mere voluntary organizations, liable to be "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine," is demanded for permanent safety. The Constitution points to the remedy in that wise provision for its own amendment, contained in the fifth article:

"The Congress, whenever two-thirds of both Houses shall deem it *necessary*, shall propose amendments to this Constitution; or, on the application of the Legislatures of two-thirds of the several States, shall call a convention for proposing amendments; which, in either case, shall be valid to all intents and purposes as part of this Constitution, when ratified by the Legislatures of three-fourths of the several States, or by conventions in three-fourths thereof, as the one or the other mode of ratification may be proposed by the Congress."

The framers of this great instrument did not anticipate, whilst multiplying checks, and distributing power into several departments with a view to guard against centralization, that from an unseen source a *monster* would so soon spring forth to grasp all the departments, and wield undivided power to the destruction of liberty; that legislative, executive and judicial functions would, by a *combination of States*, be absorbed by one section, and directed with one will. But, guided by a wisdom beyond their abilities, and in the exercise of a prudence beyond their forecast, our fathers inserted the clause above quoted, leaving to their descendants the duty to watch the encroachments of tyranny, and, by timely amendment of their work, to provide other safeguards when needed for the preservation of the great principles which this Confederacy of States was made to protect and perpetuate. The Constitution was ordained by the sovereign parties to the compact as a safe rule of action for majorities in exercising the powers of Government, not to infringe the rights of minorities or individuals. It does not require the unanimous voice of the people in the passage of a law which would be the perfection of government, but approximates to universal consent, in the system which it adopts requiring concurring majorities.

Experience has taught us that we must approximate nearer still the general consent, in legislating for the country, by interposing other checks to the power of simple majorities, or the rights of the minority will be endangered. The concurrent majority of the States, and of the people of the States, as expressed in the choice of the President, possesses now the right in the exercise of the Executive veto, to demand for the passage of a law the concurrent majority of two-thirds of the members of the Senate and House of Representatives. Now, I believe, if a veto power was by an amendment of the Constitution given to each sovereign State when in a legal convention of its people, applicable to all Federal acts, judged by the State to be injurious to its rights, and all laws thus vetoed to be null until restored by the concurrent majority of two-thirds of the Federal Legislature, a sufficient guarantee would be afforded to insure the minority against usurpation, and would still preserve in the majority legislative power equal to all the necessary wants of a just Government.

This negative power in the possession of each State would not only impart feelings of greater security, but would, by preventing partial and unwholesome legislation, keep the General Government in the path of right and justice, and instill a love for the Government and intensify a patriotism which would make our system at once indestructible and invincible. Nor need we apprehend that this power would ever be perverted from its true intention, and employed on trivial occasions, for in its exercise the dignity of the State would be involved; besides the expense and solemnity of the convocation of the sovereign people would confine its use only to the most urgent and important objects. There is not the slightest danger that the General Government would be brought to a dead lock, as some suppose, and cease its legislative functions. Our common necessities and the general welfare would force the passage of all laws promotive of the interests of all sections, and such other measures as might be beneficial to particular parts, without detriment to the remainder. It would certainly prohibit all special and partial legislation, and for this reason ought to commend itself to every just mind. We should not perish for the need of laws. Let no man fear that. Under the present system we are surfeited near unto death with the abundance of statutes. Our State governments would be found equal to all our necessities in this regard, for the preservation of essential rights, and the promotion of industrial prosperity. And even should every act of the General Government be met by a veto, two-thirds of each body would never fail to agree upon such measures of general utility as the legitimate operations

of the Government might demand. But, in a very large majority of all the acts passed, there would be no veto. The great difficulty and expense attending the exercise of this conservative power, would certainly confine it to great and grave questions; which would seldom arise, when the Government agents were cognizant of the fact that there was a power over them to review their acts and bring their measures to the scrutinizing test of a concurrent two-thirds majority. But how shall this reform be effected? Is it practicable? This question I propose to answer. There are two ways pointed out, in the clause of the Constitution cited, by which this amendment may be made.

1. Congress, by a two-thirds vote, may propose amendments for the ratification of the States, three-fourths of which have the power to adopt.

2. The application of two-thirds of the States, through their Legislatures, can compel Congress to call a convention to propose amendments, which will be adopted upon the ratification of three-fourths of the State Legislatures or conventions. The first plan I believe impracticable; and hence have made no move in pursuance of it. In the second way stated, I believe the amendment which I have suggested to be feasible.

The absolute necessity for such an amendment, or some similar provision, makes it in my judgment, practicable. There is no use in disguising the fact, for every reflecting mind knows, that we have either to amend our Government, submit to oppression, or prepare ourselves for the calamity of dissolution. For one, I feel, and must believe, that the *revolutionary* blood, which animated our fathers in the great conflict of 1776, courses too freely and warmly in their children's veins to submit to oppression. Our love of country; a cherished inheritance, purchased by the joint struggles, and bequeathed by a kindred ancestry, whose precious blood commingled in the sacrifice of their lives for its attainment, calls aloud unto their sons to preserve it, and makes us all desire to cherish its integrity, and hand it down, with undiminished glory, to our children's children—to the latest generation. This inevitable resistance to oppression on the one hand, and, on the other, this universal love for the stars and stripes as they float upon land and sea, proud emblems of liberty, point unerringly to that amendment of our system which will avoid the first alternative, and secure the blessings of the other to us and our children.

Let then, the States of the minority section, in the true spirit of patriotism, set forth their grievances with earnestness; and with the gravity due to the importance of the subject, call upon the majority section to consider of an amendment of the Constitution, so as to effectually guard them against oppression; and without harshness, as a matter of State policy and safety, demand additional guarantees; and with firmness make such amendment *a condition of longer continuance in the Union*. And who will assert that such a proposition will not be met by the great conservative portion of the North in the spirit of kindness? There is nothing sectional in the amendment proposed. It only depresses the Federal power, and elevates the State, without regard to locality. It magnifies the municipal, but at the same time strengthens the federative organization. Unless our people are mad, and bent on self-destruction, they will hesitate long, and consider well, before they reject a plan of settlement, which, while it can injure no interest, is so full of peace and promise to our country.

The one *great object* of our Constitution was to divide and distribute the powers of Government in such manner as to prevent centralization, which ever has been and ever will prove despotic, be the form of government whatever it may. In despite of all our safeguards, this centralization has taken place, *in the combination of States* before alluded to; and now we shall feel its tyrannical hand, with its bitter fruits of oppression and revolution, unless, in the spirit of the fathers who made the compact, and with the wisdom which then guided them, we shall, by timely amendment and a farther distribution of power, restore the lost equilibrium, compose the disturbing elements, and bring back the Government to its true principles. Let this be done; let each State be accorded the political power of self-protection; and minorities, however small and weak, be made to feel secure in their rights, and all sectional jealousies and strifes would cease; because no section however large, would have the power, without the consent of the minority, to pass a law injurious to its interests. The growing power at the North would no longer awaken fears in the South that it would be used for the destruction of southern property; nor would the expansion of the South be any longer used by northern demagogues to frighten the unsophisticated masses into the belief that we designed establishing slavery in all the States. All sectional questions would be banished from the Halls of Congress, and each and every part of this great country would be left free to pursue its own policy, enjoy the rewards of its own virtues, and be subject to the penalties of its own sins.

Under the present system, with all the departments of Government, in the power, and nearly in the hands of one section, with well-grounded apprehension on the part of the other that the Government will be perverted and used to its injury, we are not only retarded in the development of our internal resources, but will soon become, in consequence of these unnatural antagonisms, the prey to foreign intrigue and ambition. Our country must expand; the Anglo-Saxon race, with its intelligence, thrift, and moral virtues, will go to



the fertile lands and misgoverned States south of us. By contiguity and natural necessity, these neighboring provinces belong to our civilization, and will embrace our ideas of representative and republican government. Sir, no foolish stipulations with foreign Governments, binding us down to prescribed limits, can repress our energies, or prevent our expansion. We will preserve the national faith; but, whilst scrupulously observing our engagements, we will see well to it that no more manacles, such as the Clayton-Bulwer *blunder* imposes, shall be put upon our limbs. That fruitful source of our present entanglements in Central American affairs, must be removed; steps should be immediately taken to abrogate that abominable treaty. I am glad, that by a joint resolution before Congress, the attention of the country has been called to it, and I trust that the voice of condemnation will be full and emphatic.

Sir, the hearts of our people responded to the Monroe doctrine when first announced, and will continue to demand a policy which prohibits European interference with the affairs of this continent. Our duty and our destiny require us to keep free from foreign complications, and to regulate and adjust our balances in accordance with American ideas and institutions. All eyes are now turned, with intense curiosity, to the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean sea. The boarding of our vessels, and the vigilant police exerted in intercepting our emigrants to those States, invests the whole subject with peculiar importance to the South. Nor is the apparent good understanding between our own and the British Government, and the harmonious co-operation observed in the rigid execution of our neutrality laws, at all calculated to allay suspicions, and quiet sectional jealousies. I must confess, that I regard the pending negotiations in Central America with great distrust; and have no faith that American interests will be promoted by the mission of Sir William Gore Ouseley. We shall never become, with my consent, a party to any settlement which allows the slightest interference, on the part of foreign Governments, with the States south of us: and he mistakes the character of our people who supposes that, under any circumstances, they will quietly abide such a result. We intend to hold this, and all succeeding Administrations, to a strict observance of these conditions, be the consequences what they may. Notwithstanding our sectional bickerings, I trust that homogeneity in national interests will be sufficient to make the Monroe doctrine the positive policy of our country for all time to come.

But, sir, all our sectional difficulties would be harmless, and all obstacles to our expansion, northward and southward, would be removed, were our system of government so amended that in no contingency could the Federal power be controlled by simple majorities, and perverted to the detriment of the minority. Were the great laws of true Republicanism allowed to have free scope—which protect each community in the enjoyment of its own rights—and which leave each local government undisturbed to judge and adopt its own line of policy, with no restraints or encouragements, other than the law which profit and loss impose, we might confidently hope to plant our institutions in all latitudes. The contest between free labor and slave labor would no longer obstruct our progress; each system would cherish profits and abhor losses, and, governed by the law of climate and production, would regulate itself in accordance with the true interests of all. Interference by one section or State with the internal affairs of another, would not be ventured; for the recognized independence of each would contribute to the union and independence of all. There would be no more combinations against each other; but, as it should be, one grand combination of confederated States against the despotisms of the world. Our borders would be enlarged in accordance with the necessities of an increasing population. And the spirit of liberty, emanating from our great and high example, like lines of light from the sun in his strength, would stream out upon the nations and prepare them for a conquest wherein captive and conqueror could alike rejoice together. Cuba would soon be ours by her own consent, without money and without price. Mexico would plant her stars upon the blue field of our flag, and the small but beautiful States of Central America would sparkle on the same canopy.

Mr. Chairman, this is not a picture of fancy. Nothing but our vices will prevent its realization. Our own divisions may check our progress. The armies of the world cannot do it. Let us be at peace with each other, and crowned heads and their cohorts would pass away like chaff before the “rushing, mighty wind” of freedom. Plots and counterplots, diplomatic intrigues, cunning schemes and alliances of despotisms, would vanish into thin air before the march of a free, united, and virtuous people. Have we the wisdom to direct our strength in the fulfilment of so exalted a mission? In the fear of God, in the love of justice, and in works of righteousness; by a sacred regard for the rights and interests of each other; by cultivating the spirit of good will and fraternal affection, we can achieve this glorious destiny. But should our vices predominate, and those who now have the power cling to it with a purpose of oppression, the end draws near when we shall, yielding to the mad impulses of passion, divide and devour each other—bid discord reign supreme, and rush headlong to destruction. Sir, in conclusion, I earnestly invoke the States of the Union to a consideration of this important subject, with an ardent hope that some remedy may be provided to protect, preserve, and perpetuate our liberties.









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